

Senate Bill 1137

Transportation Funding Proposal

Senator Norma J. Torres (D-32)

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 1137 proposes to reimburse all school districts up to at least 50 percent of their approved costs for Home-to-School Transportation expenses. This is consistent with the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) whereby districts will reach their target funding level over the next seven years, per the budget agreement contained in the 2013-14 Education Trailer bill. In addition, it provides a cost of living adjustment (COLA) to all districts.

BACKGROUND

In a recent review of school transportation in California the Legislative Analyst Office reported that funding levels for school transportation in California have remained stagnant for over 30 years. School transportation funding allocations have never included funding for enrollment growth – resulting in a growing funding disparity for school districts that have enrollment growth. In addition, school districts throughout California counties must transport larger numbers of students longer distances – creating an additional, disproportionate cost burden on many districts.

The current statewide district reimbursement rate for Home-to-School Transportation is 38 percent. The funding distribution is so uneven that some school districts see less than ten percent reimbursement, while others receive over 80 percent of their approved costs. The CA School Transportation Coalition estimates that approximately \$800 million annually must be taken from school district general fund revenues to fund home-to-school transportation budget deficits. In California, from the most recent data available from the California Department of Education (CDE), school districts spent over \$1.2 billion transporting students. In the 2012-13 budget, California school districts received less than \$492 million in funding from the state

to pay these costs, resulting in a funding deficit of \$800 million, which must be paid out of general fund revenues. This funding deficit is an unequal burden that hits rural and growing school districts much harder than more densely populated and flat enrollment school districts.

This bill would bring severely underfunded districts up to a 50 percent reimbursement rate, as well as provide COLAs for transportation funding to all school districts. Applying a COLA can ensure districts will not be negatively impacted as costs of service rise.

SUPPORT

California School Employees Association
(CSEA) (*Co-Sponsor*)
California School Boards Association (CSBA)
(*Co-Sponsor*)
California Association of School Transportation
Officials (CASTO)
Central Valley Education Coalition (CVEC)
Kern County Superintendent of Schools
(KCSOS)
Small School Districts' Association (SSDA)

STATUS

Senate Committee on Education Hearing:
April 9, 2014

CONTACT

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